

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND MOTIVATION TOWARD THE USE OF TWO STAY TWO STRAY IN ENGLISH LEARNING FOR ECONOMICS STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines students' perceptions and motivation toward the use of the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique in English for Economics classrooms. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to students from Economics faculties. The results indicate that students generally perceive TSTS as an engaging and enjoyable method that enhances their understanding of English materials through peer explanation, interaction, and collaborative learning. Most participants stated that TSTS made complex concepts easier to grasp, increased their participation, and allowed them to learn new vocabulary and communication skills in a more relaxed environment. In terms of motivation, the technique encouraged students to prepare before class, boosted their confidence in speaking, and reduced anxiety compared to traditional lecture-based teaching. However, several challenges were noted, including limited time for explanation, uneven group roles, and the need for clearer instructions. Despite these constraints, students strongly recommended the continued use of TSTS and suggested improvements in time management, group allocation, and the addition of games or ice-breaking activities to enhance engagement. The study concludes that TSTS is an effective and motivating collaborative strategy for teaching English for Economics.

Keywords: *Two Stay Two Stray, Students' Perception, Collaborative Learning, Learning Motivation, English for Specific Purposes*

INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalized markets and international collaboration, English proficiency has become increasingly important for students in economics-related programs. English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and more specifically English for Economics, aims to equip learners with the vocabulary, discourse practices, and communicative strategies necessary to participate in academic and professional economic contexts. Practical, discipline-focused materials and learner-centered

activities are therefore critical to bridge general language ability with specific needs (Runggo & Hendriyani, 2025 ; Aziz & Anjaniputra, 2025 ; Maulida, 2024; Diana et al., 2018). Recent resources and needs analyses emphasize the urgency of designing ESP courses that attend to students' communicative competence in economics contexts rather than only focusing on decontextualized grammar instruction (Jubhari et al., 2022;Batsila & Shrestha, 2022;Yacoub, 2025).

Traditional lecture-based instruction, while efficient for delivering content to large classes, often limits student talk time, reduces opportunities for peer interaction, and fails to sufficiently develop productive language skills such as speaking and academic explanation (Beigzadeh et al., 2024). Active and cooperative learning approaches respond to these shortcomings by distributing responsibility for learning across group members and by creating structured opportunities for negotiation of meaning, explanation, and peer feedback. Meta-analyses and systematic reviews in language education point to cooperative, technology-enhanced approaches as effective means to increase student engagement, encourage target-language use, and produce measurable gains in speaking and collaborative skills (Liu, Y., Thurston, A., & Ye, X., 2024; Nurmala et al., 2023). Such studies underline that integrating cooperative structures in language classes can be especially beneficial when the pedagogical design intentionally supports interactional opportunities aligned with course goals.

One cooperative structure that has gained traction in second-language classrooms is the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique, a Kagan-inspired activity that organizes learners into small teams where two members “stay” to receive visiting peers and two members “stray” to visit other teams to exchange information (Dauyah & Purnama, 2017 ;Nadifah Sekarwangi et al., 2025; Rahman & Mardiana, 2021). The technique is designed to maximize student talk, create multiple peer-teaching moments, and scaffold mutual accountability through role assignment (Rijal et al., 2020). Studies applying TSTS to English classrooms report positive outcomes for student participation, vocabulary development, and confidence in oral production (Mariska et al., 2025 ; Jupri et al., 2022). Classroom-based action research and quasi-experimental studies in recent years have documented

improvements in speaking and comprehension when TSTS is appropriately structured and closely monitored by instructors (Azizatul Zahro et al., 2024).

Beyond measurable language gains, TSTS appears to have important affective benefits: students often report increased motivation, reduced anxiety when speaking, and greater willingness to prepare and explain material to peers. Qualitative evidence from student questionnaires and interviews indicates that the peer-teaching element of TSTS fosters a sense of responsibility and competence students prepare more thoroughly because they know they will teach or explain to classmates, which in turn deepens their own understanding (Shaikh, 2024). At the same time, the method is not without reported challenges. Time constraints, uneven participation within groups, and variability in peer explanations can hinder optimal outcomes unless instructors provide clear role assignments, time management, and scaffolding for content accuracy (Saofa & Ramadahan, 2025 ;Nafsiyah et al., 2025). Recent literature reviews specifically flag time management and role distribution as recurrent concerns that require pedagogical attention when implementing TSTS.

Despite growing interest in TSTS and cooperative learning across EFL/ESL contexts, relatively few studies have explored students' perceptions and motivational responses to TSTS specifically within English for Economics courses. The ESP context poses distinct demands: learners often require precise economic lexicon, the ability to explain data and concepts succinctly, and confidence to participate in discipline-specific discussions (Wiastuti et al., 2024). Understanding how economics students perceive peer-teaching formats like TSTS—and whether such formats enhance their motivation to engage with economic discourse in English—is therefore an important empirical and pedagogical question (Rahmania et al., 2020; Winardi, 2022;Sufiyandi et al., 2025). Preliminary needs assessments in related programs point to low self-rated English proficiency among many economics students and a clear preference for interactive, practice-oriented activities that map directly to disciplinary tasks.

This study responds to that gap by investigating students' perceptions and motivation toward the use of Two Stay Two Stray in English for Economics classrooms. Using semi-structured interviews as the primary instrument, the

research aims to (1) describe how students experience TSTS in terms of clarity, engagement, and perceived learning gains; (2) examine motivational effects, including preparation behavior, confidence in speaking, and willingness to take communicative risks; and (3) identify perceived constraints and suggestions for improving TSTS implementation in ESP settings. By centering learners' voices, the study seeks actionable insights that instructors can use to adapt cooperative structures for discipline-specific language learning. The findings are expected to contribute both to the ESP literature and to practical pedagogy by clarifying whether and how TSTS supports the twin goals of content accuracy and communicative fluency in an English for Economics classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS)

Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) is a cooperative learning technique designed to maximize student-to-student interaction, peer teaching, and accountability within small teams. In a typical TSTS arrangement students form groups of four: two students remain at the home group ("stay") while the other two members ("stray") visit other groups to exchange information or collect feedback. The visiting students return to their original group to report, discuss, and consolidate learning. This rotation creates multiple short episodes of peer explanation and listening, increasing opportunities for meaningful talk and rehearsal of target forms or content. Recent methodological reviews and syntheses describe TSTS as a structured peer-teaching strategy characterized by role assignment, brief visiting phases, and reciprocal information sharing (Mariska et al., 2025) .

Typical implementation steps reported in classroom studies include: (1) forming heterogeneous groups of four and assigning roles; (2) giving each group a focused task or material to master (e.g., a concept, vocabulary list, or problem set); (3) allowing intra-group preparation time so "strayers" can prepare to explain; (4) executing timed stray visits during which visitors present or gather information from other groups; (5) returning to the home group for reporting and synthesis; and (6) teacher-led debriefing and corrective feedback. Researchers stress teacher

orchestration—clear instructions, cue cards or templates for explanations, and strict timing—to ensure equitable participation and content accuracy.

In English language classrooms TSTS has been associated with increased oral production, vocabulary practice in context, lower speaking anxiety, and higher student engagement. Small-group visits reduce the affective filter for many learners, giving them lower-stakes opportunities to practice disciplinary vocabulary and explanation routines before addressing the whole class. Empirical classroom reports show gains in speaking fluency and willingness to communicate when TSTS is paired with scaffolds such as cue cards or pre-taught lexical sets.

English for Economics

For ESP contexts like English for Economics, the affordances of TSTS are especially promising. Economics discourse requires concise explanation of concepts, data interpretation, and accurate use of technical vocabulary—skills that benefit from repeated, contextualized practice and peer feedback. By alternating roles of explainer and listener, students rehearse domain-specific terminology while receiving immediate peer clarification and examples. Recent discussions in ESP pedagogy recommend coupling TSTS with explicit lexical scaffolding (vocabulary lists, explanation templates) and instructor monitoring to balance communicative practice with content fidelity.

Students' Perceptions in Language Learning

Perception in educational psychology is generally defined as an individual's process of interpreting, organizing, and making sense of information and experiences. Perception is not merely the reception of stimuli but the subjective interpretation shaped by prior knowledge, expectations, beliefs, and emotional states (Tracy, 2019). In language learning, students' perceptions refer to how learners interpret instructional practices, classroom conditions, teacher behavior, and their own learning abilities. Positive perceptions are strongly associated with higher engagement, motivation, and willingness to participate, whereas negative perceptions may reduce learners' confidence and inhibit language performance (Richards, 2020). Contemporary research emphasizes that students' perceptions act as cognitive filters, shaping how they experience classroom activities and how they

evaluate the usefulness of particular teaching methods (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Multiple factors contribute to the formation of students' perceptions in language learning. First, prior experiences—such as previous success or failure in language classes—significantly influence how students view current learning tasks. Learners who have experienced supportive, communicative classrooms tend to perceive new instruction positively, whereas those who experienced high anxiety or teacher-centered environments may hold reservations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Second, affective factors, including anxiety, confidence, motivation, and interest, strongly shape learners' classroom perceptions. Research conducted within the past five years emphasizes the role of emotional safety and supportive peer interactions in cultivating positive perceptions of language learning activities (Tracy, 2019). When learners feel comfortable, they are more likely to perceive instructional methods as helpful and less threatening.

Third, teacher-related factors—such as clarity of instructions, feedback quality, enthusiasm, and rapport—play a central role. Recent studies show that students perceive teaching strategies more positively when teachers provide clear scaffolding, structured roles, and consistent guidance (Saldaña, 2025).

Fourth, the learning environment and social dynamics influence perceptions. Collaborative and interactive environments tend to produce more positive perceptions than highly competitive or passive classrooms. Group composition, peer support, and classroom climate all affect how learners perceive the usefulness and fairness of an instructional method (Richards, 2020).

Finally, task characteristics—including difficulty level, relevance, and novelty—shape perceptions. Activities perceived as meaningful, challenging, and connected to real-life language needs typically generate more positive learner responses (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Students' Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation in language learning is commonly defined as the set of internal and external forces that initiate, sustain, and direct learners' goal-directed behavior in second/foreign language (L2) acquisition. Contemporary frameworks treat motivation not only as a trait but as a dynamic system influenced by social,

cognitive, and contextual variables (Shen et al., 2024). Two influential theoretical families dominate recent scholarship: Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which foregrounds the continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation and the roles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness; and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), which emphasizes the learners' 'ideal L2 self', 'ought-to L2 self', and the learning environment/social networks. Both frameworks have been widely used to interpret why learners persist, engage, or disengage in language tasks.

Research distinguishes broadly between intrinsic motivation (learning for interest, enjoyment, or mastery) and extrinsic motivation (learning for instrumental outcomes such as grades, jobs, or social approval). Recent meta-analyses and empirical studies indicate that intrinsic (autonomous) motivation is a stronger predictor of deep learning, sustained engagement, and willingness to communicate in the L2, whereas extrinsic motives often drive short-term compliance but may not sustain long-term effort unless internalized (Alamer et al., 2025; Shen et al., 2024). Studies also highlight the mediating role of self-regulated learning (SRL): motivated learners who use SRL strategies (planning, monitoring, and reflection) show better persistence and achievement (Henry & Liu, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore students' perceptions and motivation toward the use of the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique in an English for Economics classroom. A qualitative descriptive approach is appropriate for studies aiming to capture participants' experiences, explanations, and viewpoints in rich detail without imposing theoretical constraints (Sandelowski, 2019). Recent methodological discussions in applied linguistics also emphasize the suitability of qualitative description for classroom-based research where the goal is to document naturally occurring perceptions and learning experiences (Richards, 2020; Saldaña, 2025).

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which is a strategy to select participants who have experience in the instructional approach can provide

meaningful insight (Palikas et Al, 2019). A total of 5 participants from the economics faculties who had recently completed a series of lessons using the TSTS technique.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, administered through an online open-ended questionnaire format. Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility for participants to elaborate on their thoughts while still guiding responses around the study focus (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The interview protocol comprised questions related to learners' experiences during TSTS activities, perceived benefits, perceived challenges, motivation, confidence, and suggestions for improving the technique in ESP contexts.

All interviews were conducted in written form to accommodate students' varying comfort levels in English and ensure thoughtful reflection. Written interview formats have recently been recognized as effective in qualitative educational research because they reduce performance anxiety and allow participants time to articulate responses (Given, 2020).

The data collection occurred over an eight-week period. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study and asked to provide consent prior to participation. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used during transcription and analysis. Ensuring ethical transparency aligns with current qualitative research standards in language education (Tracy, 2019). The completed interview responses were downloaded, organized chronologically, and prepared for analysis using qualitative coding procedures.

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021), which includes familiarization with data, generating codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Thematic analysis remains one of the most widely used and methodologically robust approaches in qualitative language research because it provides systematic steps for identifying patterned meanings across a dataset.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Student Engagement and Enjoyment

Students consistently reported that Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) created a lively, interactive, and enjoyable atmosphere. Many described the technique as “fun,” “more interesting,” and “not boring.” One student explained:

“The TSTS method is very interesting because we can interact with each other and exchange ideas”

Another participant mentioned how the activity changed the class dynamics:

“This method makes the class more active and not silent like usual”

Students valued the movement and rotation between groups, emphasizing how it stimulated participation. One commented:

“It makes me more involved because I have to talk to other groups and listen to their explanations”

These excerpts align with recent studies showing that cooperative learning strategies increase student engagement and decrease classroom passivity. Putri’s (2024) systematic literature review found that cooperative structures like TSTS enhance classroom dynamics and encourage positive socio-emotional engagement among learners. Similarly, Al Falah and Rosy (2021) reported increased motivation and participation when students were involved in TSTS, attributing this to the interactive nature of peer exchanges. In higher education contexts, collaborative learning has been shown to activate students’ attention, stimulate curiosity, and promote sustained engagement through shared tasks (Richards, 2020).

The findings also resonate with broader literature on active learning in ESP classrooms. Recent research in ESP teaching emphasizes the importance of interaction-rich environments where students can actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive information (Saldaña, 2025). By requiring students to explain economic terms to one another, TSTS aligns with the interactionist view of language learning, which posits that meaningful communication contributes significantly to second-language development.

Overall, students’ positive affective experiences support claims that TSTS is a suitable technique for courses that require both conceptual understanding and

active language use.

Improved Speaking Confidence and Learning Motivation

Many students shared that TSTS significantly boosted their confidence in speaking English. One stated:

“I feel more confident speaking in small groups first before speaking in front of everyone”

Another student noted:

“It forced me to speak, but in a good way. I became braver to use English”

Students also highlighted how the method increased their motivation to prepare:

“I have to prepare because I will explain it to other groups”

“Knowing I will be the one explaining makes me study the material more seriously”

These findings are consistent with studies highlighting the role of cooperative techniques in lowering affective barriers to language learning. Susanti (2024) found that TSTS improved learners’ self-confidence and contributed to better overall learning outcomes.

The small-group interactions inherent in TSTS correspond with Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis, which emphasizes that reduced anxiety facilitates language acquisition. More recent research supports this idea, showing that collaborative learning can boost students’ willingness to communicate, especially in multilingual or EFL settings (Tracy, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Motivation was another notable benefit reported by participants. Students frequently described feeling more motivated to prepare the material in advance because they knew they would have to explain it to others. This is consistent with findings by Monicha and Nurlizawati (2024), who observed that peer-teaching structures encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

Deeper Understanding of English for Economics Content

Students overwhelmingly agreed that TSTS helped them understand English for Economics concepts more deeply. One participant state that:

“When I explain the material to other students, I understand the topic better”

Another explained how peer explanations reinforced comprehension:

“Hearing from other groups helps me understand terms that I didn’t fully get before”

Several participants commented that explanations from peers were easier to follow:

“Friends give examples that are simple, so it’s easier to understand compared to reading alone”

Several interviews suggested that peer explanation was perceived as more accessible than teacher explanations because peers used simplified language or relatable examples. This aligns with findings by Astuti, Wahdian, and Jamilah (2024), who reported that TSTS enabled learners to process complex information through peer-mediated scaffolding. In the context of ESP, such scaffolding is especially valuable because it helps bridge the gap between general English proficiency and domain-specific vocabulary (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants also noted that TSTS helped them practice economic vocabulary in context. Instead of memorizing terms, they used the terminology in authentic explanations, which contributed to improved retention and application. This supports recent ESP research suggesting that active use of disciplinary vocabulary, rather than passive exposure, leads to better long-term acquisition (Richards, 2020; Saldaña, 2025).

Moreover, several students reported gaining new perspectives by listening to explanations from other groups. The exposure to multiple interpretations or examples expanded their understanding of the same concept, echoing findings by Sahrul and Sari (2025), who observed that TSTS promotes cognitive flexibility and collaborative problem-solving.

Overall, students' reflections indicate that TSTS facilitates deeper, more meaningful comprehension of English for Economics content, consistent with modern theories of cooperative and experiential learning.

Challenge and Suggested Improvements

Despite the positive outcomes, students identified challenges that affected the effectiveness of TSTS. The most common issue was time:

“The time is too short, so the explanation feels rushed”

“We could not finish explaining everything before we had to move to another group”

Another challenge was uneven participation:

“Sometimes only one or two people speak, and the others just listen”

“Some group members are passive and don’t contribute much”

Students also requested clearer instructions:

“Please give clearer directions because sometimes we are confused about what to explain”

They suggested adding variations to the activity:

“Maybe add games or small competitions to make it more fun”

Despite its positive reception, participants also identified several challenges related to the implementation of TSTS. The most frequently mentioned issue was time management. Many students felt that the visiting phases were too short, preventing them from fully understanding or explaining the material. This concern is echoed in the literature: several recent studies report that insufficient time allocation can reduce the effectiveness of TSTS by limiting opportunities for meaningful exchange (Al Falah & Rosy, 2021; Putri, 2024).

Furthermore, some participants suggested that clearer instructions and more examples from the instructor would help improve the clarity of group explanations. This aligns with findings by Susanti (2024), who argued that teacher scaffolding is crucial for ensuring accuracy and depth during peer interactions.

Participants also expressed interest in incorporating additional elements—such as games, competition, or visual aids—to enhance engagement. Such suggestions reflect broader trends in recent TSTS research, which increasingly integrates multimedia or gamified components to modernize cooperative learning (Richards, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study examined students’ perceptions and motivation toward the Two Stay Two Stray (TSTS) technique in an English for Economics classroom using

qualitative interviews. Students generally perceived TSTS as an enjoyable and effective cooperative learning method that increased engagement, confidence, and understanding of discipline-specific English. The dynamic rotation between “stay” and “stray” roles encouraged active communication and reduced classroom passivity.

Findings show that TSTS improved learners’ confidence and motivation to speak English, as the small-group format provided a safe environment and the responsibility to explain material encouraged better preparation. The technique also enhanced comprehension, as explaining concepts helped students process information more deeply and use economic vocabulary in authentic contexts. Peer explanations were viewed as helpful for clarifying difficult points.

Despite these strengths, students noted challenges such as limited time, uneven participation, and unclear instructions. These concerns highlight the need for clear guidance, structured roles, and adequate time allocation to ensure effective implementation.

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